




The Gleaner

1995



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THE GLEANER 1995

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"The Warmth of a Memory"

As I sit and wonder in the cool, tranquil air
I'm warmed with the memory of a man who cared
A memory as vivid as the sun's rays at dawn
Our hearts are now heavy knowing he's gone

With outstretched arms and a warm embrace
Mr. S. live his life with a smile on his face
He'd open his home to all that he knew
Unselfish and giving to me and you

When, like an eagle, we'd soar, he was right along side
His friends and his family were where he found pride
In our hearts there is a special place we will hold
For a man who has touched us in ways that are untold

To all he left a special bond
A family of which he was very fond
So in this time of great sorrow and pain
We must look to each other for the strength to sustain

As the darkness falls and brings the night sky
I'm rekindled by the spirit that has not said goodbye
For his memory lives on in each one of you
Those that he loved, those that he knew

The time has come for our heartfelt goodbyes
To a friend whose memory brings tears to our eyes
But we must move on and spread our wings
And remember the warmth that a memory brings

written in the memory of Mr. Schatschneider
by Matthew Dougherty

Now and Forever

Just hold me in your arms
Every night
Never let me go
Not for one moment
I need you loving me
Forsaking all others
Accepting all flaws
Respecting me for who I am

Make me yours
Always
Right or Wrong
In happy times
Even in sorrow

Hear my cries
Open your heart
Receive the love
I give to you
Now and Forever!

Dedicated to Jenn and Wyatt
By: Stephanie Kightlinger

Beauteous flowers bloom by
the twinkling of a creek.
And a hush throughout the forest
beckons
To the heart, the soul, the joy
of our humanness.
Spinning around in a rush of
gold, green, violet, blue.
A spectrum bursts like a stained
glass window around me.
Rejoice, Live, Run,
Roam.
Freedom and Love and Joy
course through my veins
As I stare in awe at the
oneness, the unity of
spirit in the turning
Of the world.

by Leah Brachs

Beautiful

Under silent silver stars
To my eyes nothing can compare,
Such a vision to behold,
Such a sight to draw my stare.

So elegant and pristine
That a touch would bring desecration,
A singular creation
SO beautiful, so beautiful.

FLUFF

Once upon a mealtime dreary,
While we labored long and weary,
Shelling shrimp for mortals,
Came this feline to our portal.

White she was and free of tether,
Licking whiskers soft and fine,
But alas, she had no collar;
"Fluff" became her name in time.

AristoCATically espoused us,
Claimed our Persian rugs for liars;
Whiskers Lickins as her menus,
Made her meals from Checkerboard Square.

Her curious reluctance to leave
Convinced us that she liked our fare.
And sine that day eight years ago
Has spent the best of nine lives here

by: Dr. Richard Ziemer

Midnight births the chimes
Of a thousand chapel bells
Of brass, of bronze, of gold,
The flower of a hundred winds
Laced with jasmine, cinnamon and clove.

A rare find
So foreign to mine eyes,
Save this treasure for the future
So beautiful, so beautiful.





TALK TO ME PROZAC

by steve kotler

Prozac divine
Assuring lucid nightmares
Ritualistic metabolic
Talk to me naked on the
Enchanted fraying carpet
Clothe me with hallucinations
Of a true sane world
Feed me with dreams
For innocence of being
Because you know
That's all you do
Trip the cripple
And beat the stub of
The limb-less
Until they lie mute,
 still,
 crushed,
With agony
Of being thrown
From the carpet
Where we float
And feel safer
Than in your world,
Where we don't know how to be
Or what to feel
So we need you even more!

So speak to me prozac!
I want to know
What you want from me
Where do you subside?
In that fixture on the white, matted walls?
Speak to me and let me know
If what you bring is truth
Or just a madman's lonesome nightmare.
I want to go home.
Where did you hide the map?





Sanitary White Walls

Oh, sanitary white walls,
Absent of any hue,
Fall in on me,
Fall in on ME,
So tired-a spirit blue.

And weary eyes
Swear the room grows small,
Or maybe-sweet tears,
I grow too tall.

Oh, sanitary white walls,
Too bright for my vision,
Such glare,
Such glare,
I'm plagued with indecision.

Should I paint them
This blood of mine red,
Or leave them naked
To ravage me head?

Oh, sanitary white walls
That rally for my death,
Fall on me,
Fall on ME,
Swiftly steal my breath.

Popsicle

by Carrie Preston

There is an air of aloofness that always resides in my thoughts, a challenging ice sculpture of failed ideas that I must continuously convince myself were successful. And through these self lies I have become a zombie, frozen and immobilized. I have been banished to an Antarctica of my own creation, forced to socialize with fellow Penguins and hateful Sasquatches. Yes, I am cool, the almighty sophisticated and mature. I am the epitome of summer evenings spent restlessly at the beach with casual acquaintances who never remember anything. And why am I so cool? Why have I been chosen to play the role of a frostbitten popsicle left much too long in a colorful box behind stacks of tupperware? Why is the glaze of white crystals so thick upon my surface that my flavor can no longer be distinguished? The answer is because I unknowingly choose to be. I am afraid to decide between lime and cherry. I am secure on my lonely continent in the freezer. That is why I am cool.

Making Waves

by Carrie Preston

The water held the same placid expression as my face as I stood before it challenging its stillness. Yet I could not break the aching silence. My eyes, though seemingly calm, flashed with this knowledge, that perhaps bestowed a greater hate for the unwanted serenity. Restless I fiddled with the gray pebble in my hand, tracing its shape again and again, almost eroding it with the tips of my fingers. I contemplated its spherical properties, comparing it with the celestial and distant, though its earthen nature I had acknowledged long ago.

Desperately I clenched this stone, grasping in such a personal and intimate way how the extent of its power accompanied the insignificance of its being.

Finally I threw it, its arch remaining for such a long and dangerous moment in the air, that it enhanced the ambience, screaming the purport for its existence. Then it fell. With force this miniature fragment shook the great and reaching water. It destroyed the false sense of peace that for so long hung over the lake. Pleased, I watched the circular ripples undulate from where the rock had pierced the surface, and pictured its descent to the bottom.



Dad's Toolbox

Dr. Richard Ziemer

Did you ever want to play with the tools in your dad's toolbox? When I was a child, I learned early that Dad's toolbox was off limits to children; he would be upset not to find a wrench, pliers, or screwdriver that he counted on having handy in that greasy assortment of Sears Craftsman specimens of American-made machinery.

As I became an investigative teenager, I used to ask if I could borrow a wrench, or pliers, or screwdriver; Dad would ask "Why?" "What are you going to use it for?," or "Remember to put it back," or "Don't break it." I kept wanting my own box of tools, but Dad's were always better. Then, when I won a contest sponsored by General Motors for designing and building my own model car and received an X-acto Knife set, I appreciated in my own new tools what Dad had loved about his.

Years passed, and one day in the summer of 1985, as I visited with my parents in Oregon, Dad was working on some lawn mowers in his garage. There I was--in my forties--feeling like a boy again, listening to Dad talk of the world, of me and my family, of himself--all accompanied by how people abused their !@@@!equipment and did not change the oil, or how they would run equipment as fast as the engine would go. That contrasted with how dad ran his life: always in low gear but moving constantly--always busy working seven days a week, with no sneeze factor of vacation or relaxation built into his life.

As he worked, kneeling, forging a drive shaft from an abused lawnmower motor, he said, "Sometimes I feel dizzy, as if I'm going to fall down." I regret not getting him to a specialist for an exam, or diagnosis, or angioplasty, for I think that would have helped him. However, he did tell me he was seeing a doctor.

Maybe that life-long work of seventy-three years was catching up with him; perhaps that is why he now felt dizzy. His body was sending him signals that we all ignored or missed.

As he labored at what seemed to be trivial pursuits, I emptied tools from his toolbox and grabbed an oily rag and began cleaning and polishing all the snap-on 7/16, 1/2, 5/8ths-inch heads, then stiff, steel wrenches, and then pliers. When I had all the tools cleaned I turned his toolbox upside-down and got rid of a lifetime of dust, dirt, and grime; then I wiped it clean and put all the tools back in place as neatly as my obsessive-compulsive tendency could as Dad looked on. He remarked, "Do you keep all your tools like this?" "I try," I said. Then he thanked me and I stayed with him until the lawnmower purred like a new one. I felt satisfied that he finally "trusted" me enough to help him.

Only three months later, when the call came that he had a stroke, I trembled that I would loose him. The day after Thanksgiving, November 29th, 1985, we did. I flew to Oregon to be by his side for what was the last full week of his life. I gazed at the cold, unused tool lying around the garage. I never noticed if the toolbox was neat or not, but after he died, I did ask Mom for some of them.

I flew back to Pennsylvania, and one day there arrived in the mail a large, heavy box with a bronzed rod of assorted tools welded to it, resembling the skeleton of a giraffe standing on four angled legs of steel, and a note from Mom saying, "Here are some of dad Ziemer's tools for you to enjoy."

It was a non-functional piece of art that rekindled memories. Only the pliers opened, and only the acetylene lighter sparked. But it stood as a constant reminder of some of the broken and non-broken tools that Dad worked with, but never discarded, that I had longed for, but seldom got to use. They could do anything for him, why not for me?

In October 1951, our parents took us four boys out of school for a month so we could travel to Nebraska to visit my mother's father, who had had a stroke. The 1941 Chevrolet 2-door sedan that Dad had bought, which had a suspicious "knock" in the engine, carried us comfortably for about two hundred miles before two connecting rods burned out. Dad coasted into a wilderness-looking parking area beside a pile of red cinders kept for highway use. It was about 7:00 a.m.

We raised and blocked the car, he removed the oil and oilpan, removed the defective bearings with his rusty tools, and hitchhiked to Burns, Oregon, about seventy miles away. When he returned well past lunchtime with new parts, some bread, cheese, and milk, we feasted, surrounded by sagebrush and a fire that a forest ranger said we could build to keep warm. Dad relayed how he walked for over an hour before anyone gave him a ride.

That 20-hour vigil beside heavily-traveled Route 26 became the scene of a self-reliant master mechanic at work, helped by four adrenalin-filled boys and a patient wife. We took turns in the cold, handing out wrenches, holding the yellow fog light grounded against the engine compartment so Dad could see to put the pieces back in order. By the time all was in place, the battery had died, so we had to push the car to get it started. From 7:00 a.m. until about midnight we either played in the desert sagebrush, collected obsidian rocks and wood for a later science class, helped Dad, talked with a forest ranger, tended a huge fire, waved to people passing by, or bonded together on our banquet of bread, cheese, and milk.

Dad's tools were worth their weight in gold; I know why he never left home without them. They always shared the trunk with the suitcases. Now I have a similar version in bronze to flood my memory of the most able-bodied hero I remember--Freddie Ezra Ziemer.

"FRIENDLY INSULTS"

Some years ago, I read, it began in California shortly after the close of the Second World War. It grew slowly at first, like the early stages of a malignancy. No one was aware of its existence or the danger it posed. Older people were the first to become alarmed by its virulence as it spread to every corner of the country. Now it threatened to jump the Atlantic and perhaps even the Pacific Oceans. Before long, its destructive power may be felt around the world. Surprisingly, most people are still oblivious to this pervasive threat to civilized living. More ubiquitous than tract housing, automobile pollution or any known disease, it is encountered in the United States by nearly everyone, nearly every day. We all suffer in hidden ways from its baleful effects. I address the practice of promiscuous and indiscriminate use of first names.

The origins of this historically unprecedented phenomenon are not too hard to trace. Millions of men took brides and established new lives in the West during the late nineteen forties and early fifties. In a totally new environment among people of one's own age, and away from the constraining influences of family and community ties, it was natural to behave more casually. The use of first names and the illusion of intimacy it engendered seemed to provide a short-cut to friendship. Everyone wants and needs friends, after all, but the much-touted modern way of life born after the war was certainly not conducive to finding them. Physical isolation inherent in the new low-density and sidewalk-free suburban housing made meeting people difficult enough. Compounding the problem was the lack of public transportation and total reliance on private automobiles. The need to spend hours every day alone sealed inside a car made matters worse. The rise of television during the same time obviated leaving one's home to see people. These factors taken together brought down the curtain on traditional forms of social intercourse.

In more recent decades, the trend to move and change jobs frequently has accelerated. Most now seem to think there is not the time to develop the intimacy the use of first names once implied. People just go ahead and use them anyway, paradoxically making real friendship much more elusive and difficult to define than before. Gone from today's world is the beautiful moment I remember with such fondness from my childhood. After long and pleasant association with a neighbor or one of my friend's parents, my father or mother would say, "Do call me by my first name." The line had been crossed. With that warm and simple gesture, they gained a new friend.

Use of first names cheapens relationships within families. When a child calls his mother "Sue" and his father "Bob," I think it fosters a nagging sense of insecurity in the child. By permitting the child to use a form of address properly reserved for his peers, parents almost imply they are abdicating authority and renouncing responsibility for their child. Children realize how dependent they are on their parents. They want to be reminded there is someone important at home in charge to guide and protect them. Lack of respect for parents is the inevitable result. Furthermore, in the course of a lifetime children will likely encounter hundreds of people, not all of them honorable, who share the same given names as their parents. There will only ever be one Mom or Dad.

Another deleterious effect of first name address is that it divorces people from their families. In former times this was not a factor because if you knew someone well enough to use his first name, you knew his family well, or at least knew who they were. This had two bad consequences. One is for the individual, the other is for society.

Psychologists and sociologists who have studied fanatical religious cults and terrorist groups have determined that a principle motive for joining them is a deep craving among perfectly normal people to belong to something greater than themselves. If an adult is generally known by a title and a family name, his membership in that family is recognized and reinforced. This satisfies the fundamental need to belong, and has a very positive influence on a person's behavior. One is very likely to behave publicly in unattractive or disgraceful ways if one knows this behavior will color onlookers' perceptions of his parents or siblings. With the link of a common name, news of bad behavior is also very likely to get back to the family concerned. The family then imposes its

own sanctions within the home. Conversely, sociologists have attributed the amazing levels of achievement found among children of recent immigrants from the Orient to their desire to elevate their families' prestige much more than their own personal status. Family influence thus strongly encourages success and discourages crime. Not using its name when addressing individuals may actually play a role in declining school achievement test scores and rising crime rates.

Nearly everyone is frequently annoyed by the poor service and disrespectful treatment encountered in stores, restaurants and service establishments of every type today. Managers often require their staffs to wear bandages with their first names in hopes of promoting "friendliness" and good service. This has precisely the opposite of the intended result. The service personnel, who in reality, remain the strangers to the customers they are waiting on, are treated contemptuously by customers who have almost been given a green light by ludicrous name badges reading "Cindi" or "Tommy." It really is much more difficult to be rude to someone you address as "Mrs. Smith" or "Mr. Jones." Rudeness in most cases is reciprocated, so a vicious cycle of degenerating manners is thereby established. The distance and respect which use of a title implies prevents this from ever starting.

Another problem with first name address is that strangers who attempt to use your first name have no way of knowing what name you use, even when they think they do. I would never dare to risk such embarrassment. A very substantial number of people are never called by their given names or by its most popular diminutive form. I am always taken aback when a salesperson reads my name from a credit card during a transaction and proceeds to address me as "Al." My most intimate friends and family have never called me anything but "Alfred." My grandfather, for whom I was named, was always known to intimates as "Ali." Unlike me, he probably would not have remained silent after such an affront. This misguided attempt to be friendly results in something grotesque. Suddenly everyone involved looks like a fool, feels like a fool, or is actually made a fool by the bungled attempt to use a first name which there was no reason to use in the first place.

Since indiscriminate use of first names is of such recent origin, no graceful way has yet evolved to handle the unpredictable reactions to their

inappropriate use. Consequently, many people go about unwittingly offending others all day long. Meanwhile, their victims seethe with resentment and impotent rage because of their inability to stop them. This makes stressful what otherwise would be routine encounters.

Rebellion against the increasingly impersonal character of our computer-regimented world is understandable. The spirit behind the trend toward first name address is actually laudable. I hope I have been successful in showing why the practice itself is a failure. We will go a long way toward humanizing the society of the future if we look to our past. The respect you give someone by merely using the traditional form of a title and family name is an unexpected compliment certain to be warmly received. With this simple act, you have taken a big step toward real friendship.

by: Alfred Bernheim

MOVING

One foot in the door and I saw it. The walk-in fireplace was surmounted by an imposing white mantel supported by pairs of ionic pilasters. To make sure it was not an illusion, I went over to touch the woodwork. My hand confirmed the search was over. The dream of the perfect place to live was now stunning, three-dimensional reality. I was no longer ambivalent about leaving my childhood home. I could not wait to move.

Events moved quickly. Before the day was out, the owners had accepted our offer, and agreed upon a settlement date. Although the day was months off, time seemed short. My job took me overseas three days of every week, leaving at most four days at home to get ready. Planning and packing would have to begin at once.

The days of gathering a few strong friends and going down to the U-Haul Center were by now long past. This was to be a big and complicated move. Careful planning was essential.

Since my grandfather's death a few months before, our place looked like an estate auction preview at Christie's or Sotheby's. The house had already been saturated with furnishings from my Philadelphia apartment, closed back in 1979. Now even the garage was overwhelmed. We had to leave the cars, the bicycles, and even the lawn mowers out on the drive.

My maniacally efficient mother, the consummate mover and genius of furniture placement, took command. The floor plan of the house had to be drawn to scale. "Don't forget to record ceiling heights, doorway and window measurements for passage," she said. One favorite 18th century pine cupboard required nine-foot clearance. A fraction of an inch can destroy a room plan completely if it prevents a critical piece from fitting where it must.

I dreaded unpacking and repacking the garage to reach and measure inaccessible items. When I was tempted to merely estimate, I remembered that the price of a wrong guess was too great. It was not worth the chance that we might have to move a large, fragile antique down a long hallway only barely wide enough, or up one of the winding staircases, or perhaps even through a window to another floor by ourselves after the movers had gone.

Then, from my list of measurements, I made paper cut-outs to the scale of the floor plan of all the important furniture. We were delighted to find that not only would everything fit, but the larger rooms of the new house would allow for many options. The nagging fear that my grandparents' beautiful Sheraton sideboard would not fit through the front door was allayed. There was nearly a quarter-inch to spare! Before long we had the whole house mapped out, and the labeling of furniture by room number and packing could begin.

About three weeks before the move, I found the perfect tags to label the furniture. My counterpart at Japan Air Lines, who just checked out of my room, had left behind hundreds of cabin-baggage tags with bold letters stating "First Class." On the line for "destination" we would write the room number. What could be more appropriate? A few days after my return, every piece of furniture we owned was sporting a bright red, white, and gold JAL tag in preparation for "boarding."

Moving day arrived. Like an Israeli general leading a commando raid, Mother came forward again. It seemed as though only minutes after the movers had arrived, the massive tractor-trailer was completely loaded and ready for "take off."

That night, flabbergasted, I reveled in the new house. Walking from room to perfectly furnished room, I stared in disbelief. Nothing was broken. We had only pictures to hang and boxes to unpack. I had no sore muscles and was not even tired. Mother was right. Planning is everything.

Antigone Mourning
Edward O'Brien, Jr.

Noble Antigone, long ago you sorrowed,
as told in Sophocles' uplifting song,
while others grieve now.
A tale of ancient wrong
and still-bitter grief, borrowed
from the past to soothe our troubled brow.

Creon the king of Thebes, blinded by spite,
commanded that your brother,
who had warred against the state,
not be given burial rite,
the time-hallowed blessed custom
that gave the soul passage to Hades,
the nether land of the Grecian shades.
And so was denied an ancient right.

But mindful of unwritten, ever-living laws
--unchanging and just, Olympian--
you made sisterly lamentation
and broke a fragile edict of man
by sifting the soil and pouring out libation
over his familiar form, still and wan.

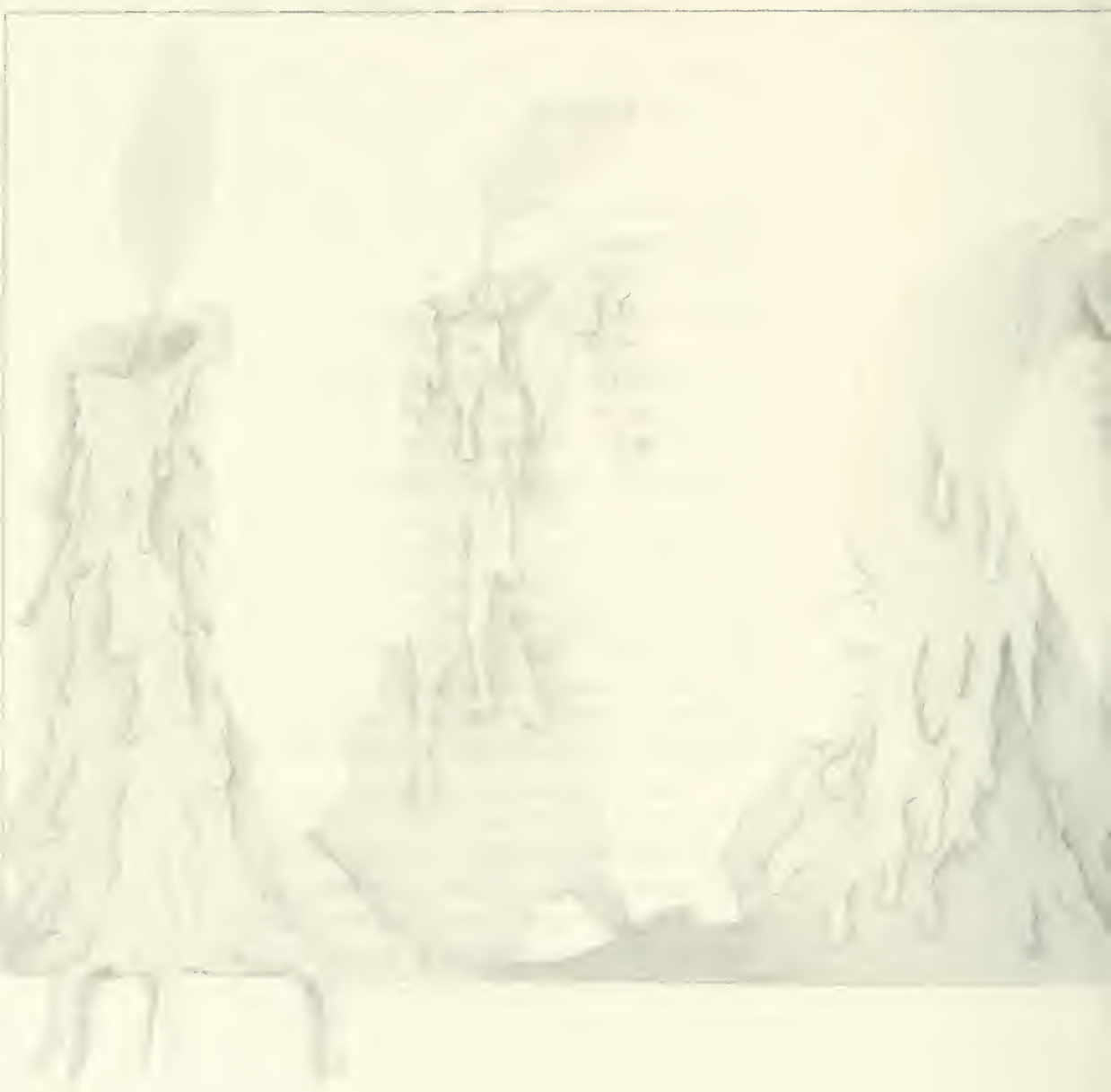
In the name of the elder faith of Hellas
you did this, the final sacred duty
to the body of your mother's son;
your brother. A crown you won
by setting his spirit free.
The will of Zeus you honored, zealous
in that bold act of piety and beauty.

You were taken to a darkling cave
to suffer and die.
"Behold what I endure...for I have
upheld that which is high."

The words are yours, O splendid maiden,
and today we know you mourn
with the hearts of those who are laden
with grief for the hapless unborn.

For they, too, bury in solemn, holy rite
the tiny flesh spurned by minions of Creon.
They, too, honor that eternal law
which Hippocrates held in awe,
and suffer, beaten by police,
scorned as fools and pious zealots,
ignored by libertarians and trendy prelates.

Antigone of Hellas, alone and forlorn,
you are sister to those
who stand for the helpless unborn
as once you stood for the helpless dead.
And though you died young and unwed,
forever you wear the thorny red rose.





Remembering the Reading

Summertime brought a special reward when I was very young. It was then my mother would take me into the center of town. She had business to take care of at the bank and the post office. Afterward, mother would treat me to a Coke at the luncheonette. None of these errands was to be the high point of our journey. I would fidget in my seat in anticipation of what was coming next.

The best part of the adventure came when we walked down Fayette Street to the Conshohocken train station. The view from the bridge overlooking the tracks was terrific. The view from the station was even better. These were the tracks of the Reading Railroad. Regular passenger service to and from Philadelphia was provided on electric multiple-unit cars.

The short wait was rewarded by a train pulling into the station to pick up and discharge passengers. The trains were towering objects of steel and glass that hissed, squealed, and shuddered to a stop. The silver and black coaches had long, neat rows of rivets and bright yellow handrails in the doorways. Spindly pantographs reached up to the overhead wires. Dirty white vapor rose from the metal boxes underneath the cars. The smell of oil, grease, and soot filled the air. The conductor stood by the train in his neatly pressed black uniform. Shiny buttons adorned his coat, and a distinguished trainman's hat completed his outfit. He would sing out the destination of the train in a loud, booming voice. "Phil-il-la-del-el-phi-ah!" With that cry, the engine made a grinding noise, and the train would start. The string of cars picked up speed, continually moving faster until they disappeared around a bend.

Riding the Reading into center city Philadelphia was a special occasion. It was exciting to climb up the steep iron steps leading into the train. The car had a high ceiling that curved down to meet the walls. The ceiling lights were encased in round bucket-like glass covers. The aisle did not go down the center of the car. There were seats for two passengers on one side and three on the other side. The seats were upholstered in a dark blue material that had a leaf-like pattern pressed into them. Window sills had black enamel paint on them worn through to the metal from many years of arms resting on them.

The train always started with a jerk and a ratchet noise followed by a moment of coasting. This pattern was repeated several more times as the train accelerated. The conductor had to walk down the aisle with his feet wide apart for balance. He took your ticket, punched a hole in it, and then returned it to you. As the train approached each stop, the conductor barked out the names of the stations. "Shawmont...Manayunk...Wissahickon..."

I sat peacefully and stared out of the open window as the world rushed by. At first, there was little to see except trees. As we approached the city, the trees gave way to the backs of crowded houses, freight yards and factories with their rail sidings and boxcars.

The end of the line was at the Reading Terminal at 12th and Market Streets. I marveled at a building vast enough to enclose a dozen tracks under its high, arched roof. There were rows of benches and rows of phone booths. Newspaper stands were filled with papers, magazines, and candy. Passengers congregated with anticipation in front of huge sliding wooden doors. The moment the doors opened, the passengers crowded onto the boarding platform. A brightly colored sign above the doors declared the destinations of departing trains. The loud, scratchy public address system was almost impossible to understand.

The conductor noticed me on one summer afternoon when I was riding back from the city. Perhaps he saw my wide-eyed look of wonder and obvious enjoyment as I traveled in his metal carriage. Perhaps he saw the unbounded pleasure of simply being allowed entrance into his kingdom. After a few words to my mother, he whisked me into the cab of the train only a few feet from where we were seated.

My amazement ran wild. I was left utterly speechless. There stood the

engineer himself! A tall, noble man with white hair and glasses, he wore a brown shirt, brown slacks, and a thick black belt. His powerful, majestic hands gently rested on the magic levers that controlled the machine we were in. The noise and air rushing into the open windows made it necessary for the conductor and engineer to speak with loud, deliberate voices. The exact words they exchanged have been lost to the ages, but the memory of the engineer's smile will last a lifetime. My view out of the front of the car was breathtaking. Trees and buildings raced past us in a blur. The tracks and overhead wires stretched out in front of us, growing ever closer until they disappeared around the next bend. Green lights on a signal pole rushed past us on the right. My excitement was at its peak; but then it was over all too soon when I had to return to the passenger compartment next to my mother for the rest of the ride home.

The Reading is now gone. The commuter lines have been absorbed into SEPTA. Reading freight is now moved by Conrail. Today, as I drive across the Fayette Street bridge, I can still glance down at the train station. For those few moments, it is 1959 all over again.

by Alan LaRock

TIME TO MOVE ON
J. SANDERS

A distant moon hangs overhead
Stars shimmering like lanterns
Behind a veil of smokey clouds
Inside the peace, chaos churns

My own set of footprints, alone
Lain to the dirge of the owl
Heavy hangs the darkness of night
Painful and silent my howl.

Crossroads, heaven, hell, and the now
Life, death, questions unanswered
Bricks and mortar cannot save me
Ears blind, the answers unheard

Darkness wraps an ancient cypress
Painful resolution rings
Heavy fingers tie the knot
Angels, birds begin to sing

Dawn wisps upon the horizon
A beauty that can't be drawn
No hopes, fear, or promises
Another day, time to move on.

Gasoline

In rage and in apathy
I fly out to the car,
Find something to free my pain,
Find something to free my demons.

Douse the house with
Gasoline,
Watch it spark, watch it burn,
All my ghosts turn to ashes.

Douse the bed with
Gasoline,
The only one who ever slept
In it was Betty the
Blow-up lover.

A moth drawn to flame,
SO orange, and yellow, and red,
Liposuction for my soul,
Freedom in a can of gasoline.

by: Eric Beresky

Porch Light

Turned on at night-fall,
Tiny yellow porch light
Left alone in the dark,
Worshipped by moths
And other strange bugs,
A beacon in the pitch
For sullen passers-by.



by: Eric Beresky

"INSIDE"

by steve kotler

Wake up
I heard you screaming
But it was just a dream
A fading glance inside you
Just close your eyes + see...
You'll see.

Did you see the people
There to take you away
Moving westward
If so why did you stay?

Tell me what you thought you saw
Standing in front of you
Tell me what you think you see
Standing inside me

Lay down
And close your eyes, now
I'll sing a happy song
About the voices inside you
That never leave for long.

Did that old man scare you
When he set you down
And said you'd be just like him.
Age will make no sound.



The Stranger

The crash of a bomb
 and the shot of a gun
Ring in my ears
 as I try to run
Away from the war,
 the despair and the fear,
Away from the death,
 the horror, the tears
But I can't escape
 the surrounding danger
I'm trapped in a place
 where peace is a stranger
Where dreams have died
 along with the soldiers
Where broken hearts lie
 among buildings that smolder.
I fall to the ground
 and all becomes silent
The invasion of peace
 seems unusually violent
But a shot pierces the air
 and peace becomes an illusion.
War is the prominent power
 and peace an intrusion.
So the battles wage on
 now that the war has begun,
We have lost our peace
 and the devil has won.

by: Christina Faust



How perceive you the images
By which your life is clothed -
Are they naked in spirit
Or sheltered from the cold?
When you wake from the sweetened slumber
Does the world reach sudden change,
Or is the vision surrounding still
As your sleeping eyes arranged?
Can you flutter in the emptiness
And feel the moment as replete,
Or do the hollows within yourself
Prevent the concept of complete?
Can you listen to the silence
And relish the music of its sound,
Or must you search endless symphonies
Before harmony can be found?
How many promising volumes
Has your tired soul read
Seeking truth and fortune,
Wanting to be led?
I'd venture that it's many
For I've done just the same
Uncertain of my happiness
Unless it had a name.
I wonder how many flowers
I missed rushing by,
Heading to see the garden
And forgetting why.

-by Carrie Preston

DIARY OF A DRUG ADDICTS MIND
J. SANDERS

Looking out a world of glass
Shielded from the man's insanity
I pound on the walls and I scream and I scream
As the preacher begins the mass

Well, my people, well well
I see we've found our ways to hell
You the wicked and you the damned
And now locked in eternity
Surrounded by insanity
Deafening profanity
Always feeling agony
Blinded by nudity
Now I guess your stuck
Yeah, shit out of luck

My insides started to lurch
So I ran from that damned church
Leaving figments of my mind

Little blue smurfs playing in a field
All that innocence to be stealed
Mr. Magoo where are you?
Hanging out with Scooby Doo
Superman where have you gone
Banging Minnie till the dawn.
Little girl sitting on a `shroom
Little girl awaiting her doom
Hoping Spiderman will come soon
And take her back to his room.

`The diary of a drug addict's mind
Isn't very hard to find
Just think of a psychedelic elf
And look inside yourself.

Looney tunes and much much more
Mc Donalds wrappers on the floor
Searching for that one last match
To pop open the escape hatch
Do what you want
Want what you will
Keep your feet off the floor
And please pay the bill
Mr. Bill I hope
Anybody got some smoke
What's the joke?
Take another token.

The Old Toyota

The old Toyota
Ain't what it use to be
Because it tried to climb a tree,
Because it tried to flatten me,
And now the poor Toyota
Is stuck up a maple tree,
I'm glad that it just missed me,
That Toyota's really crazy!

Now it's stuck for everyone to see,
Up in the maple tree,
Old and rusty,
The old Toyota wants to murder me,
But I was too swift you see,
Now it's stuck up a maple tree,
That old Toyota ain't
What it use to be.

by Eric Beresky



Eternal Play

Go swing on the boughs
Of an evergreen tree
Fly off the branches
And land beside me
The we'll prance through the forest
We'll dance in the spring
Wherever we go
Flowers we'll bring
Scattering petals
As remnants of joy
All barriers from happiness
We'll attempt to destroy
With impish delight
And fairy-like song
We'll battle all the evils
We'll undo all wrongs
So come idealists
Come dreamers
Join in the fun
Our giddy indulgence
Has only begun
Let's be free in our thinking
Let's be soft in our touch
Let's be tinkers off tinkering
Doing magic and such
Let's always meander
Let's get lost in our way
Let's be children forever
In eternal play

by Carrie Preston



Summer of the Butterfly
Gail Robynne Blum

It was the Summer of the Butterfly,
With cotton candy-puff on high.
A small child,
Bent on knee to watch
Nature's love at work.
Noticing every notch and wrinkle
In the snowy whiteness of the blooming cherry tree,
And the periwinkle blue, oh-so-blue, of a summer sky.
Yes, that child, she did manage to kiss a summertime blue
During those long, lemonade-sipping afternoons.
Summer's secrets she always knew.
But time has a quick pace
And steals away youth in its haste.

Many summers have since melted away,
But their memories still echo in the innocence of yesterday.
And that child remains a child at heart.
For she can still kiss that periwinkle-blue sky,
By being the true child
Of the Summer of the Butterfly.

Lost,
It's a sensation
difficult to explain.
Lost
in a dark forest.
A dark forest called life
filled with pitfalls
and unexplainable dangers
lurking around each turn
behind every tree
and beneath every rock
It's a forest you can't escape
But do not fear
For it is possible
to be
Found.

by Christina Faust



The Really Big Trees

So all these weird kids
 All sort of rainbow-like
Come to the city
 Walking in this revolving circle
And they all say, simultaneously,
 but in different languages
"Hey, man, we came here to plant trees."
 Trees in the city?
 "Maybe," says I.
 "Maybe," says they.

 So here they are
Right in front of my hairy face
 Without tools
They just claw and scrape at the ground
Like islanders clawing at the
 Earth for water
Some watch
 Few knelt with them
Merchants yell unheard
 From the corner.

 A strange lot they were
Trees in the city, what a stupid idea.
 "They'll never grow," says most.
 "Maybe, and maybe not," says few.
 "Why waste a day of it?" says most again,
by now, talking too much
as if they were the important ones.

Now,
I kneel with them
Scratching the city
Concrete with my hands
And rock begins to be sand
And the most begin to murmur
And the weird kids and I
Actually remove the pavement,
Making holes,

Finally,
The trees get so big
that the whole world sees them
And since they're
Part rock
Part tree
Everybody's makin' a fuss about it
So the weirdos and
I, the weirdo among weirdos,
Go back to the city
And build these nests
And make home in the trees
And everybody sees
And everybody knows
And, eventually,
The fuss dies down
And we are no longer called weirdos

Until
Mr. Police Guy sees
He don't like too much
Says we gotta all go home
Says we can't scratch that pavement
So we throw the seeds in the holes
Before leaving
Because we know
And I go to the hills with my new friends
Looking weird walking with
These weird kids
In revolving circle

So, meanwhile,
The city boys
Are in a tiz
'Cause they don't like holes in the sidewalk
Makes going to work
Hard work
So they fill the holes with concrete
After a while, though,
Trees start popping
Through the sidewalk
And nobody knows what to do
Can't chop them
They're part rock
Can't burn them
They're part rock
Can't even heave your weight against them to tip'em
They're part rock
And nobody knows what to do
Now, they're in a real big tiz
They mayor's wife is bitching
And the kids are wretched,
Yelling loud over the teacher's call
Because these trees were really big
And they won't sway, let alone fall

Autumn

The wind flow with a frigid passion
For the time was arrived when colors change.
And each leaf feeling the spiritlessness in their own souls,
Shake with undesirable fear for their future.
Their fates, in the hands of age, has taken its toll.
And the burden of life has depleted with the dawn of a new season.
As the charm of colors fills woeful eyes,
And a question is fresh in weary minds,
How, with such beauty, can death come?
And without an answer from nature, another leaf falls.

David James Dello Russo

The Blackhearted Rose

the blackhearted rose
cold, hard, black as night
like the Midas touch turned black
This is the tear that falls on the
blackhearted parent's grave
Bitter tears from dry eyes.

-Samantha Cichocki

Death

Slit her wrist ...as it was...
and see the
blood In the beginning
splatter. I thought
At one time you brought
life me
was euphoria my peace.
but now
sudden dismay. As it was,
A hint of light during,
slivers meanwhile,
through a pane throughout,
bright I brought
while on the floor, you
blood shed my peace.
and with regret,
a single In the
tear end,
falls. you took
Heart is a piece
beating- and left
pulse, up-
confusion elements me
understood, with
hopeful recovery no peace.
made possible.
Pick up the pieces- by Kim Podolsky
start over with
a new
chance.

by Kim Podolsky

The Homecoming

Jeremiah Thornton walked swiftly through the woods that stretched for many acres behind the Browning estate. His torn and tattered grey uniform hung loosely on his now thin body. He couldn't help but remember the proud figure he had been when he left for the war only twelve short months before. Jeremiah held his head high and put his shoulders back. It didn't matter now, he was coming home and his Elizabeth would think him just as handsome as ever in his uniform, even if it was a little worse for the wear.

Elizabeth- Jeremiah's brown eyes softened as he thought about his beautiful, young bride. Memories of her flowing blonde hair, sparkling blue eyes, and witty laugh had been the only thing to sustain him through the terrors of the past year. It was still hard for him to believe that she was actually his wife. Sweet Elizabeth. Even though they had only been able to spend three nights together as husband and wife, those nights had been the most wonderful three nights of his life.

Elizabeth had had trouble from the start with her father, the upstanding Samuel Browning. He had vehemently denied his daughter the right to see the young, struggling farmer from the very beginning, but the lovestruck couple had met secretly, despite Samuel's efforts, for many months. Finally, in a desperate attempt to escape her father's strangling protectiveness, the two ran away and got married with plans to move to Texas and begin a new life there together. Their plans were ruined suddenly with the outbreak of the Civil War. It had sent Jeremiah fighting, and Elizabeth back to her father's house for safety's sake.

A sudden crashing noise startled Jeremiah out of his nostalgic reverie; his trained reflexes sent him crouching instantly to the ground, clutching his rifle tightly to his side. A close survey of his surroundings proved the culprit to be an innocent, dead branch which had fallen from a nearby tree.

Jeremiah picked himself up off the ground carefully and continued slowly to the edge of the woods. He was only a mere hundred meters from his beloved bride. His heart began to beat rapidly in his chest as their imminent meeting approached. He stepped out into the moonlit gardens that stretched behind the mansion, and with the stealth of a trained and seasoned soldier, crept up to it and peered into the window that looked into the study. Jeremiah knew from experience that this was where Samuel retired each evening to smoke his pipe and to read a book. For in the days when he had been secretly courting Elizabeth he had kept watch while she climbed down the trellis that ran to her bedroom window. Now, as Jeremiah carefully glanced in, he saw that the old man wasn't in the room. So, with all his senses alert to any danger of being caught, Jeremiah turned to throw pebbles up at Elizabeth's window, as he had in the past, to get her attention. Just as he was about to launch the tiny projectiles, something unusual caught his eye.

Over in a remote corner of the lawn was the family cemetery. When Jeremiah had left, there had been only three graves. Elizabeth's grandparents and her mother were buried there then, but now there was a fourth. Since there were only two possibilities for the new grave... grim thoughts crowded all at once into Jeremiah's mind. He at once chose the more pleasant thought. If Samuel were dead... He scrambled over to the fresh mound of earth and knelt down next to the modest cross at the head. The words ELIZABETH BROWNING stared him in the face.

Dazed, Jeremiah stumbled forward and fell to his knees. It couldn't be possible! He raised his face to the heavens only to be faced with the angry presence of Samuel Browning standing protectively over the gravesite.

"When..." began Jeremiah in a grief stricken voice.

"She died in June, from a fever," he spit out coldly. "She was weak from..." Elizabeth's father stuttered and seemed to search for words, but Jeremiah didn't notice his unease through his grief-laden fog. "...from a sickness." he rushed out rudely.

"Her name was Thornton, Elizabeth Thornton." Jeremiah stated flatly. "We were married last May." He stood up stiffly, and turned to face Samuel. "Why isn't Thornton written on the cross?" Jeremiah demanded, confused.

"In my mind, she was never married to you," he uttered in disgust. "Take this, this blasphemy!" Samuel threw down a torn piece of paper which Jeremiah recognized as his marriage certificate. "Now get off my property and go back to your war. I never want to see you set foot on my land ever again." With that he turned sharply and briskly walked back to the house.

With no strings left to hold him back, and the utter despair of the night crushing his heart, Jeremiah ran indifferently back into the woods. In his mind he had nothing more to live for. The war would be his life, and he hoped, his death.

If the blood hadn't been rushing through his head so loudly, Jeremiah might have heard the plaintive and soulful wail of the two-month old baby which Elizabeth Thornton had died for to give life to.



